

REMARKS

This Response is filed with respect to the Office Action dated July 10, 2008, the period for response to which is extended to January 10, 2009.

Claims 12 and 15-30 are pending and have been rejected. By the Amendment above, Claim 16 has been cancelled without prejudice, and Claims 12, 18, 24, 25 and 28 have been amended.

The rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been rendered moot by the above editorial amendment of claims 12 and 24, respectively.

The rejections under Sections 102 and 103 based on Stone et al. will be addressed together, and are respectfully both traversed.

It would appear that Applicant and the Examiner remain in agreement as to the differences between the plug of the present invention and claims, and the device shown and described in Stone et al., with particular attention to the conical device shown in Figure 4A of Stone et al. As reflected in the Action, however, the remaining issue appears to relate far more to the geometric and semantic ways in which certain of those differences are expressed, than it does to the differences, *per se*.

In the interest of facilitating the prosecution of this application, Applicant has proceeded to amend each independent claim, and in turn, cancel claim 16 in order to provide that the plug as presently claimed be substantially cylindrical in overall shape. It is noted that claim 16 had itself been rejected under Section 102 with respect to Stone et al., though only on the simple, and seemingly incorrect assertion at page 3 of the Action that “[r]egarding claim 16, matrix 12 has a cylindrical shape”. At its closest, this statement might refer to but a part of the Stone et al. 4A

device, namely the uppermost portion as shown in that figure, but even more clearly, the overall shape of the device shown is conical, rather than cylindrical. It is hoped that this amendment will be sufficient to finally confirm these various differences, and in turn, traverse this rejection.

Finally, the Section 103 rejection based on Johnson in view of Stone et al. is respectfully traversed. Johnson is distinguished for various reasons, beginning with the fact that it is neither asserted to, nor does it serve to provide anything that would remedy the defects set forth above with respect to Stone et al. To the contrary, Johnson is merely cited as a secondary reference with respect to particular features found in the corresponding claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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